

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 AMMAN 10009 291559Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 051474

O R 291500Z DEC 75

FM AMEMBASSY AMMAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6498

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

S E C R E T AMMAN 10009

EXDIS

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, JO,SA, XF

SUBJECG: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI -- KING KHALID VISIT

SUMMARY: RIFAI CONFIRMED THAT SAUDIS CAME TO JORDAN FULLY SUPPORTING THE EGYPTIANS. HE ASSESSED THE SUPPORT AS BEING BASED ON SAUDI BACKING FOR THE SINAI AGREEMENT BECAUSE IT HELPED TO AVOID WAR,CAREFUL EGYPTIAN HANDLING OF THE SAUDIS, AND LUCRATIVE FINANCIAL BENEFITS TO INDIVIDUAL SAUDI LEADERS FROM SAUDI-DINANCED CONTRACTS IN EGYPT. RIFAI BELIEVES KHALID IS KEPT INFORMED BY HIS BROTHERS WHO SEEK HIS APPROVAL ON MAJOR ISSUES. KHALID IS PHYSICALLY IN QUITE POOR HEALTH. RIFAI ALSO TOLD ME THAT THE SYRIANS ARE HOPELESSLY OUT OF TOUCH REGARDING THE EGYPTIAN INTERNAL SITUATION AND SADAT'S STAYING POWER. RIFAI NOTED THAT SAUDIS HAD NOT FINALLY COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO FINANCE FULL AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM, WERE VERY DISTURBED BY THE HIGH PRICES, BUT IN THE LONG RUN HE FELT THEY WOULD GO ALONG. END SUMMARY.

1. DECEMBER 29 RIFAI GAVE ME A REPORT ON KING KHALID'S VISIT TO JORDAN.

2. HE BEGAN BY CONFIRMING WHAT KING HAD TOLD ME THAT SAUDIS CAME TO JORDAN WITH A VERY STRONG PRO-EGYPTIAN

SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 02 AMMAN 10009 291559Z

STANCE. HE SAID, HOWEVER, THAT SAUDIS ARE UNLIKELY TO

BE VERY MUSCULAR IN PUSHING THIS VIEW WITH THE SYRIANS. I ASKED RIFAI FOR HIS ASSESSMENT OF WHY THE SAUDIS HAD ACCEPTED THE EGYPTIAN POSITION. HE SAID IN HIS OPINION THERE ARE SEVERAL REASONS: (A) BECAUSE THE SAUDIS ARE HAPPY WITH ANY AGREEMENT WHICH HOLDS OFF A POSSIBILITY OF WAR AND ARE PLEASED WITH THE SINAI ACCORD FOR THAT REASON. IN ADDITION (B) THE EGYPTIANS HAVE HANDLED THE SAUDIS VERY ASTUTELY -- KHALID TOLD JORDANIANS THAT SADAT HAD GIVEN HIM ABSOLUTELY CARTE BLANCHE TO WORK OUT ANY AGREEMENT HE WISHED WITH THE SYRIANS ON SADAT'S BEHALF. KHALID WAS IMMENSELY FLATERED AND SAID OF COURSE HE WOULD NEVER WORK OUT ANYTHING DISADVANTAGEOUS TO SADAT EVEN THOUGH SADAT HAD TOLD KHALID HE WOULD ACCEPT ANYTHING THAT KHALID COULD WORK OUT. AND FINALLY (C) RIFAI SAID THERE IS A SORT OF MAFIA OPERATION BETWEEN SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT WITH KAMAL ADHAN, FAHD, SULTAN AND OTHERS SHARING IN COMMISSIONS THROUGH AGENTS LIKE KASHOGGI PAID ON SAUDI INVESTMENTS IN EGYPT. ASHRAF MARWAN IS THE PRINCIPAL CONTACT FOR THE OTHER SIDE AND PROJECTS LIKE THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE FRENCH MYSTERRE PRODUCTION PLANT IN EGYPT INVOLVE HUGE COMMISSIONS FOR BOTH SIDES.

3. RIFAI SAID THAT KHALID SEEMS TO BE KEPT INFORMED BY THE OTHER SAUDIS AND THEY APPEAR TO GAIN HIS APPROVAL FOR VARIOUS PROJECTS THEY UNDERTAKE. FOR INSTANCE FAHD HAD ORIGINALLY RAISED WITH RIFAI SAUDI SENSITIVITIES ABOUT IRAQI PROJECTS IN THE PORT OF AQABA. WHEN KHALID WAS HERE, HE RAISED THE SAME QUESTION DIRECTLY WITH KING HUSSEIN (AS KING REPORTED TO ME YESTERDAY). ON THE OTHER HAND, RIFAI WAS WORRIED ABOUT KHALID'S HEALTH. HE SEEMED TO FALL ASLEEP EVERY TIME HE ENTERED AN AUTOMOBILE. HE WOULD ASK QUESTIONS AND THEN FALL ASLEEP BEFORE THE ANSWER COULD BE GIVEN ONLY TO WAKE UP AND ASK ANOTHER IRRELEVANT AND UNCONNECTED QUESTION. KHALID WAS TOLD ABOUT JORDANIAN ELECTION PLANS BUT APPEARED NOT TO COMPREHEND WHAT KING HUSSEIN WAS TALKING ABOUT.

4. RIFAI THEN NOTED THAT WHEN ASAD WAS IN JORDAN IN DECEMBER LATTER SEEMED TO HAVE A VERY UNREALISTIC VIEW OF THE EGYPTIAN INTERNAL SITUATION. SYRIANS SEEM TO THINK SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 03 AMMAN 10009 291559Z

THAT SADAT IS UNDER TREMENDOUS PRESSURE FROM OPPOSITION IN EGYPT AND LIKELY TO BE REMOVED SHORTLY, PARTICULARLY IF SYRIANS KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ON SINAI II. RIFAI SAYS JORDANIAN ASSESSMENT IS TOTALLY DIFFERENT -- SADAT IS IN A STRONG DOMESTIC POSITION AND SINAI II HAS EVEN ADDED TO HIS STRENGTH. ASAD STILL INSISTS THAT SYRIA WILL NOT PATCH THINGS UP WITH EGYPT UNLESS SADAT GOES OR HE REPUDIATES SINAI II. THE LATTER POINT IS EXPLAINED

BY SYRIANS AS BEING POSSIBLE BECAUSE IN THE PAST EGYPT UNDER NASSER REPUDIATED AGREEMENTS MADE WITH THE BRITISH OVER SUEZ. RIFAI LAUGHED AND SAID THE SYRIANS SEEM TO BE WILDLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH REALITY ON THIS ISSUE.

5. RIFAI SAID THEY HAD DISCUSSED WITH ASAD ALSO SAUDI SUPPORT FOR AIR DEFENSE SYSTEM. ASAD SAID THE SAUDIS WOULD HAVE TO PAY. IF THE SAUDIS COULD NOT BE PERSUADED THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TO BE BLACKMAILED. FOR EXAMPLE SYRIANS SAID IF THEY DID NOT GET THE RABAT PAYMENTS CONTINUED, THEY WERE PREPARED LITERALLY TO THREATEN THE SAUDIS. RIFAI SAID HE JOKINGLY SUGGESTED TO ASAD THAT ALL THEY WOULD HAVE TO DO IS THREATEN TO GO TO WAR WITH THE ISRAELIS AND THE SAUDIS WOULD PAY IF ONLY TO KEEP THEM FROM DOING IT.

6. ON THE QUESTION OF SUPPORT FOR JORDANIAN AIR DEFENSE, RIFAI WAS MORE RESERVED ON THE RESULTS THAN THE KING HAD BEEN WITH ME

YESTERDAY. HE SAID THE SAUDIS HAVE NOT YET GIVEN A FINAL APPROVAL AND WERE MUCH TAKEN BACK BY THE HIGH COSTS. RIFAI SAID THE JORDANIANS HAD TOLD THE SAUDIS FIRMLY THAT THEY WOULD NOT BUY HALF A SYSTEM, ADDING THAT THIS IS WHAT THE ISRAELIS WANTED TO PRESS THE JORDANIANS TO DO THROUGH THE U.S. CONGRESS LAST SUMMER. EVENTUALLY, THE SAUDIS WERE TOLD THAT IF SAUDI ARABIA COULD NOT FINANCE THE FULL U.S.S. SYSTEM, THE JORDANIANS WOULD GO ELSEWHERE FOR CHEAPER - WEAPONS, IMPLYING THAT THEY WOULD PURCHASE EQUIPMENT FROM THE SOVIETS OR "BORROW" A SOVIET SYSTEM FROM SYRIA. RIFAI SAYS HE FEELS UNCERTAIN ABOUT THE SAUDI FINAL REACTION, BUT ALL THINGS CONSIDERED HAS REASON TO HOPE FOR THE BEST. HE ASKED IF WE WOULD TALK WITH THE SAUDIS ABOUT THE COSTS INVOLVED. I SAID
SECRET

SECRET

PAGE 04 AMMAN 10009 291559Z

THAT RIGHT NOW THAT MIGHT BE A MISTAKE UNLESS THE SAUDIS ACTUALLY ASKED US FOR INFORMATION. THE SAUDIS MIGHT FEEL THAT WE AND THE JORDANIANS WERE TRYING TO GANG UP ON THEM AND THAT IT SEEMED TO ME THE SAUDIS NEEDED TIME TO DIGEST THIS DEVELOPMENT. IF THE SAUDIS ASKED US, I SAID I WAS SURE WE WOULD RESPOND WITH INFORMATION ABOUT AND SUPPORT FOR THE FIGURES WHICH WE HAD QUOTED. RIFAI SAID JORDAN HAD ALREADY TAKEN THE LIBERTY OF TELLING THE SAUDIS THAT THEY COULD VERIFY THE INFORMATION WITH THE US. IN ADDITION, I TOLD RIFAI THAT THE SAUDIS WERE BUYING A SIMILAR SYSTEM AND HAD BOUGHT THE EARLIER VERSION OF THE HAWK AND WOULD KNOW FROM THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE WHAT KIND OF COSTS WERE INVOLVED.
PICKERING

SECRET

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, CHIEF OF STATE VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 29 DEC 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: greeneet
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975AMMAN10009
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750448-1082
From: AMMAN
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t1975129/aaaaahlx.tel
Line Count: 168
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: greeneet
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 06 AUG 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <06 AUG 2003 by KelleyW0>; APPROVED <03 DEC 2003 by greeneet>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
06 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CG: TALK WITH PRIME MINISTER RIFAI -- KING KHALID VISIT SUMMARY: RIFAI CONFIRMED THAT SAUDIS CAME TO JORDAN FULLY
TAGS: PFOR, JO, SA, XF, (RIFAI, ZAYD), (KHALID)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 06 JUL 2006